

Getting Acquainted

Purpose

To meet one another, to review the students' knowledge of the Bible, and to introduce the theme for the year: *The Bible—The Story of God's Faithfulness*.

The term *Hebrew Scriptures* refers to the books of the Old Testament.

You Will Need

- "Who Are You?" (Student's Notebook, page 1–2)
- "Types of Writing in the Hebrew Scriptures" (Student's Notebook, page 32)
- "Bible Quiz" (see page 145 in this Guide)
- Bibles
- Name tags
- Markers
- Index cards
- Pencils
- Simple prize for each student
- Laminating machine (*optional*)
- Press-on labels (*optional*)

Think about how you will arrange the space. For this session, you need an open space for the students to move in to arrange the books of the Hebrew Scriptures and space for teams to work together.

Place Cards (*optional*)

Place the cards with the books of the Hebrew Scriptures on a table. Have the students work together to arrange the books in order, without talking or looking in the Bible. Have them check their arrangement when they are satisfied with what they have, and then make corrections as necessary.

Background for Teachers

The Bible is a collection of many different writings. The word *Bible* comes from the Greek, *biblio*, and literally means "book." The word *holy* means "set apart" or "special." All the books in the Bible deal with one main character: God. They all tell how God worked in history to create, and later redeem, a people. The stories of the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Torah or Pentateuch) were passed orally from one generation to another. During the time of King David and King Solomon (1000–922 B.C.) these stories were written down. Through this study of the whole Hebrew Scriptures, your students will come to realize that the God of Israel is also their God.

Assemble: God Calls Us Together

Before the session you will want to make name tags for the students. On each name tag print the name of a different book of the Hebrew Scriptures. Be sure you have Genesis, but then put book titles in random order. If you have laminated the name tags, use colorful press-on labels to add the book of the Bible. Be sure to have blank name tags for anyone who shows up unexpectedly.

Make a set of index cards with the books of the Hebrew Scriptures on them and signs with the different types of literature in the Hebrew Scriptures. Save the cards and signs to use throughout the year.

As your students arrive, introduce yourself and distribute the Student's Notebooks and pencils for students to complete "Who Are You?" (Student's Notebook, pp. 1–2). Pass out the name tags and take care of any tasks such as taking attendance.

Instruct the students to line up in the order of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures, according to the books on their name tags, without either talking or looking in the Bible. When they have finished, have the student wearing "Genesis" check his or her position against the table of contents in a Bible. If there is a mistake in the order of any student, that student should ask people to move

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The Pentateuch or the Torah (Teachings)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

The Historical Books

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 and 2 Samuel
1 and 2 Kings
1 and 2 Chronicles

Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetical and Wisdom Books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
Lamentations

The Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

This list is according to the introductions for each group of books in the NRSV edition (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc.). You may want to refer to the introductions for brief sentences explaining each type of writing.

to the proper place. Continue having each student check his or her position in line against the table of contents. When everyone is lined up in the order of the books, have students say the name of the books like a roll call.

See that everyone has a Bible and have them find Psalm 9. Read aloud verse 1 and ask your students to read verse 2. Finish with the following prayer.

Gracious and powerful God, send us your Spirit as we begin this new church school year. Grant us minds that seek your wisdom and hearts that know your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Bible Study: We Hear God's Word

Briefly review that the Bible is made up of many books and several types of writings or groupings. The groupings (also in "Types of Writing in the Hebrew Scriptures" in the Student's Notebook, p. 32) are found in the sidebar.

Distribute the index cards with the books of the Hebrew Scriptures that are not on the name tags. Each student can have several books.

To divide the group into the types of literature, one literary type at a time, have the members of the group stand when their books are named, forming a straight line with the names of their books displayed so the rest of the group sees the cluster of books. Give the group a sign with its literary type on it. To review, have each one say the name of the book she or he is representing and then read the name or classification on their sign together. In a smaller class, one student may have two or more books of different literary types. That student will have to move from place to place as the literary group is naming the books in it.

Keep track of the score and keep notes, recording what information the class already has to use for evaluation at the end of the course. If you wish, provide a treat (something very simple, such as a peppermint or an appropriate bookmark) for each member of each team.

Claim: We Respond to God's Word

Tell your students you would like some idea of what they know about the Bible, and especially the Hebrew Scriptures. (Explain that sometimes you will be referring to the Old Testament as the Hebrew Scriptures.) Invite them to play the game "Bible Quiz" found on page 145 in this Guide. Number the students off by 2, 3, 4, or whatever number will give you evenly divided teams. Then have each team number off so each team member has an assigned number. Explain to the teams the rules of the game:

1. The teacher reads the question. The questions are found on page 145. Consider adding your own questions to make the game more challenging.
2. Allow a short time for groups to consult. Warn them that overhearing an answer from another team is okay. This will help keep the group conversations down to a whisper.
3. At a prearranged signal (turn out lights, clap your hands, or ring a bell), the groups are to stop talking.
4. Draw a number or roll a die, and the team member assigned that number on each team will give an answer. Do not declare an answer right or wrong until each team has answered. No one on the team can help the designated respondent. (Not knowing which team member will be called on to give the answer will make everyone more responsible for taking part in the group conversation.)

Depart: God Sends Us into the World

Stress that the Bible is a book in which God is the main character. The focus for this year of looking at the Hebrew Scriptures is *The Bible—The Story of God's Faithfulness*. The Bible verse that is the key to the year is "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God" (Exodus 6:7a). If your students will be studying the New Testament survey next year, explain that they will study the New Testament later and that learning more about the Bible will help prepare them for the confirmation process.

Encourage everyone to bring a Bible each week. Keep additional Bibles in the room, but encourage them to use their own Bibles. Explain that each session will close with a prayer based on a psalm from the Hebrew Scriptures. In this prayer, the students are to respond when you signal them, saying: "And the people said." Their response is: "O God, my delight is in your law."

You might want to print the course title, *The Bible—The Story of God's Faithfulness*, and the key Bible verse, "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God" (Exodus 6:7a) on a banner to hang in the room.

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1. This prayer is based on Psalm 1 as printed in the *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 611.

As you read Psalm 1 (page 611 in the *Book of Common Worship* or from the Bible), have the students say their response after verses 2, 4, and 6. Conclude with the following prayer:

*Eternal God,
in your loving wisdom you set us beside the fountain of life,
like a tree planted by running streams.
Fill us with a love of your wisdom,
that we may bear fruit in the beauty of holiness;
through Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.*¹

Evaluate

Which members of the class are familiar with the names of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures? Who was most active in getting the books arranged in order? Which types of activities engaged the students? Are there students who seemed not to be a part of the small groups?

Small groups can be important to learning, but you may need to arrange them in advance so the learning is enhanced. Over the next couple of weeks, keep track of the friendships that already exist in the class. Watch for those combinations of personalities that do not help the well-being of the class as well as those combinations that contribute to healthy interaction within the class.

Future

If possible, display teaching pictures of stories from the Hebrew Scriptures around the room. Arrange the room for work in pairs or groups of three.

You may want to read *The Westminster Guide to the Books of the Bible*, pp. 6–12.

Who Are You?

My name is _____

My birthday is _____

My address is _____

My phone number is _____

My school is _____

in _____

The people in my family are _____

Something about myself that I want everyone in this class to know: _____

My Favorites

Foods

Friends

TV Shows

Hobbies or Sports

Books

Types of Writing in the Hebrew Scriptures

The Pentateuch or the Torah (Teachings)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

The Historical Books

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 and 2 Samuel
1 and 2 Kings
1 and 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetical and Wisdom Books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
Lamentations

The Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi